may be delay on account of extensive trials of the equipment/weapon/ system in varied terrains and climatic conditions, position taken by vendors during commercial negotiations, delay/denial of export licence to the vendor by the Government of his country etc.

Steps to secure release of missing soldiers of 1965 and 1971 wars

1589. SHRIMATI JAVA BACHCHAN: Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that War Widows Association, through a demonstration, drew the attention of the Government to the missing soldiers of 1965 and 1971 wars;

(b) what is the number of soldiers reported missing for each of the two wars; and

(c) whether Government has renewed its efforts to secure release of these soldiers from Pakistan and/or trace them if they are not in the custody of Pakistan Government, if so, with what results?

THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE (SHRI PRANAB MUKHERJEE): (a) No such incident has come to the notice of the Government in the recent past. However, a certain number of Prisoners of War are believed to be in the custody of Pakistan.

(b) The number of soldiers reported missing during the two wars are given below—

(i)	1965 War	—	01
(ii)	1971 War	—	255

(c) As per extant policy on the subject, the soldiers missing during the 1965 and 1971 wars are presumed to be dead. However, Government, through diplomatic channels, has been consistently taking up the issue of the early release and repatriation of the Prisoners of War believed to be in the custody of Pakistan. The matter was also raised during the visit of the Prime Minister of Pakistan to New Delhi in November, 2004. It was also discussed during the Foreign Secretaries discussions on December 27, 2004. Pakistan has not acknowledged the presence of these prisoners of war in its custody.